

Get the Big Idea	<u>The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest</u> by Lynne Cherry
Objectives:	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand important ideas from a character's words and actions as well as from story events • Synthesize big ideas from fiction using several strategies, especially inferring, visualizing, and connecting. • Construct important ideas based on content information
Materials Needed:	<p><u>The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest</u> by Lynne Cherry</p> <p>Character/Big Idea Anchor Chart</p> <p>sticky notes</p> <p>poster paper or 11x17 paper</p>

Time	Activity
15 min.	<p>Opening of the Day and Independent Reading -</p> <p>As students enter, they will begin with 10 minutes of independent reading time. Opening - students sitting in a circle up close. Use this time to review the schedule for the day and build engagement and motivation.</p>
20 min (total)	<p>Read Aloud/Shared Reading (whole group)</p> <p>(explicit instruction) - This is where teachers connect and engage students' interest and activate and build their background knowledge, finding out what they know. Teachers use this time to think aloud, modeling and demonstrating the "inside" story of reading mentor texts. Students enter in by turning and talking and "holding" their thinking on sticky notes.</p> <p>Connect and Engage:</p> <p><i>Today we are going to read a book that is very different from the other books about the rainforest we have read. You have learned a lot about the rainforest from nonfiction. We are going to switch gears now and read a story—the author calls it a “tale”—about the rain forest. It is fiction. As you know, fiction means the events in the story didn’t really happen. But sometimes we learn important ideas from fiction. This book will challenge you to think seriously about the future of the rain forest.</i></p> <p><i>The title of the book is “The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest.” The Amazon River is a huge river flowing through the continent of South America, and there is a lot of rain forest habitat along this river. Here it is on our globe/map. So it’s called the Amazon rain forest. Take a look at the cover of this book. There are some animals you may recognize, living in and around this huge kapok tree. You may already know something about them. Turn and talk. Share what you already know about the animals, this</i></p>

giant tree, and any questions you have. [After a minute, ask kids to share their thinking, especially their background knowledge.]

Your background knowledge about the rainforest is really growing as we study this topic—and reading this book will add to it. I mentioned that this story is a tale. Throughout the story, the animals do the talking, so we know immediately it is fiction. But, as we pay attention to what the animals say, we will learn a lot about an issue that I know is important to you: the survival of the rainforest as a habitat for all kinds of animals. As we meet the animals that are the characters in the story, we will learn some new and perhaps surprising things about them.

Let's read the Introduction, which tells us about the book. Close your eyes and imagine you are in the hot, steamy rain forest as I read.

In the Amazon rain forest, it is always hot, and in that heat everything grows and grows and grows. The tops of the trees in the rain forest are called the canopy. The canopy is a sunny place that touches the sky. The animals that live there like lots of light...The bottom of the rain forest is called the understory.

The animals that live there like darkness. There, silent snakes curl around hanging vines. Graceful jaguars watch and wait.

Wow, these words really paint a picture in my mind of what it looks and feels like to be in the middle of a rain forest. Are you visualizing and feeling what it's like to sit in the rain forest? Turn and talk about what you visualize, feel, and maybe even hear. [Kids turn and talk for a minute – then continue reading]

And in this steamy environment the great Kapok tree shoots up through the forest and emerges above the canopy. This is the story of a community of animals that live in one such tree in the rain forest.

That's so interesting. The author tells us that this one, big kapok tree—with its huge trunk and vines and leaves that you can see in the picture—is home to a community of animals. That means that all the animals that live in and around this giant tree depend on it for food and a home. Let's look for a minute at how tall the tree is in this picture; you can't even see the top of it! It's full of animals! I see birds soaring around it, a snake slithering down a hanging vine, a monkey swinging through its branches. Keep thinking about the words in the story and the pictures they create in your mind.

Model and Guide

Now as I read, I'm going to show you how to infer what's going on in the book--what the animals are doing and saying and what's happening to them. We have inferred and visualized before. Remember how we listen carefully to the author's words and view the pictures to infer and figure out what is going on? Listen now as I read.

Two men walked into the rain forest. Moments before the forest had been alive with the sounds of squawking birds and howling monkeys. Now all was quiet as the creatures watched the two men and wondered why they had come. The larger man stopped and pointed to a great Kapok tree. Then he left.

The smaller man took the ax he carried and struck the trunk of the tree. Whack! Whack! Whack!...Soon the man grew tired. He sat down to rest at the foot of the great Kapok tree. Before he knew it, the heat and hum of the forest had lulled him to sleep.

In this story, the author, Lynne Cherry, doesn't tell us why the man is cutting the tree down, but I know from my background knowledge that people cut down trees to use the wood or sell it. And sometimes when the trees are gone, people build houses on the land. Or people might use the land the trees used to be on to plant crops, sometimes for food. I think these might be some of the reasons the two men are trying to cut down the tree. Turn and talk about what you think is happening. [Kids turn and talk for a minute – then discuss....depending which strategies were used, the conversation may take different angles. Here's an example: *You used several strategies to think more deeply about what's happening in the story. You inferred what the character was doing, like I did. You asked a question as you tried to understand why this was happening. And you combined your background knowledge with the information in the story to infer that cutting down the tree would be harmful to the animals that live there.*] *It's so important to use your background knowledge and text clues to make inferences when you read. Let's read the next part.*

A boa constrictor lived in the Kapok tree. He slithered down its trunk to where the man was sleeping. He looked at the gash the ax had made in the tree. Then the huge snake slid very close to the man and hissed in his ear "Senhor, this is a tree of miracles. It is my home, where generations of my ancestors have lived. Do not chop it down."

On this page we meet an animal, a boa constrictor, who is telling the sleeping man not to chop down the tree. Watch what I do to respond. I'm going to put what the boa constrictor says into my own words. I think the snake is saying that the tree is amazing -- because it gives all the snakes a place to live. And the boa is trying to convince the man not to chop it down.

[Write teacher's thought on the Character/Big Idea Anchor Chart for the students] *Notice the Anchor Chart has a column for the character in the story, in this case, the boa, and another column for the big idea we infer from what the character said and did.*

Now it's your turn. Turn and talk about how the boa constrictor and the big ideas you infer from the story. [kids turn and talk briefly, then share out. Look for and add to the chart connections kids make or inferences/big ideas about the boa] *You each had your own thoughts, and you inferred and made connections to the big ideas. That's what good readers do to understand what they read. They make inferences about what the characters said and did as they think for themselves to come up with big ideas that are not exactly written in the story. Or they make connections to what they know or have learned about rain forests to better understand the story.*

I know you're anxious to hear the rest of the story, but we're going to continue inferring as we finish this book in small groups today.

<p>(20 min. /group) 60 min total.</p>	<p>Fluency Often students move into pairs (fluency partners) or small groups to deepen and apply their learning.</p> <p>Independent Reading Students will engage in independent reading, making connections to the text, jotting down interesting words and adding to their journal.</p> <p>Small Group Instruction – mini-lesson</p> <hr/> <p>Small Group Instruction</p> <p><i>Now it's your turn to practice inferring the big idea. Sometimes we'll turn and talk, or you can do this on your own. Go ahead and write your thinking about the big ideas on a sticky note. I'm going to continue where we left on in our whole group time...</i></p> <p>A bright and small tree frog crawled along the edge of a leaf. In a squeaky voice he piped in the man's ear: "Senhor, a ruined rain forest means ruined lives...many ruined lives. You will leave many of us homeless if you chop down this great Kapok tree."</p> <p><i>Turn and talk. What do you think about the tree frog's message?</i> [choose 1 or two kids to share their inferences/big ideas] <i>Take a minute to think about the big idea here.</i></p> <p><i>You can write and/or draw your understanding.</i> [give students 1 or 2 minutes to get their big ideas down]</p> <p>[Continue reading the story -students will continue to respond to the read aloud. Stop every few pages and ask kids to turn and talk about the animals in the story and then write or draw their responses]</p> <p><i>Now we are going to do something really important as we read the end of the story. We have been focusing on the characters' words and actions to understand some big ideas. Now we're going to think about all of the characters and all of the events in the story to figure out what the author most wants us to learn and remember about the topic. This is called synthesizing, that's a pretty big word! When we synthesize, we put all of our thinking together--our connections, our questions, and our inferences -- to make sense of the whole story.</i> [Read aloud a few more pages, pausing after the boy's words.]</p> <p>"Senhor, when you awake, please look upon us all with new eyes."</p> <p><i>I infer from the boy's words -- "please look upon us all with new eyes"-- that he is asking the man to see the animals in a new way. No longer will the man want to cut down the kapok tree. Instead he will see the wonderful animals that live there and how important that tree is to their survival. I am synthesizing what the characters -- the animals -- have been saying and doing to make sense of the whole story. That's what I am thinking. Now I'm curious to know what you are thinking.</i> [take a minute to listen to student responses]</p> <p><i>Such great thinking, you are really beginning to understand the important ideas in the story! I can visualize what's happening at the end of the story from your words. When we use all of our strategies to make sense of the story, we are synthesizing. We're going to finish the last pages during our writing time today!</i></p>
<p>15 min.</p>	<p>Recess/Snack Break</p>

<p>(15 min /group) 30 min total</p>	<p>Group 1: Take Home Selection (split groups - 15 minutes each) Two members of the team will assist students in the selection of 'just right' books to take home for the week</p> <p>Group 2: Modeled/Shared/Interactive Writing (Connected to Morning Read Aloud Book) -Teachers will use this time to teach a very short mini-lesson, which students will often apply in responding to their reading.</p> <p>[Read the end of the story. In the end, the man who was going to cut down the tree abandons his ax and departs.] <i>Now, I'd like you to look over your sticky notes from small group and try to synthesize what you think are the most important ideas in the story. Take the sticky notes you've written and put them on your own piece of paper</i> [give students poster board or 11x17 paper]. <i>When you put all your thinking together, try to come up with the big ideas for the whole story. Remember what good writers do when they are writing in order to make their words and ideas clear for the reader. You can illustrate some of the big ideas from your sticky notes after you've written about your big idea. I can hardly wait to hear and see what you draw and write.</i> [Teacher coaches individual students while they are writing]</p> <p><i>I am handing out bookmarks to each of you. I want you to write the words: I synthesize (get all of my ideas together) on the bookmark. This week as you read your take home books I want you to think about what you learned and after reading your take home book, synthesize with someone at home.</i></p>
<p>5-10 min</p>	<p>Sharing/Closing - Use this time to reflect on the day. This is a good time to suggest ways students can share their learning at home, to read a short poem or interesting text, hear student book talks and to share their own literacy by talking about what they are planning to read at home.</p>

Character/Big Idea Anchor Chart

<u>Character</u>	<u>Big Idea</u> (words/actions) (what the character said and did)

